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STATEMENT OF J. STROM THURMOND, GOVERNOR OF SOUTH  
CAROLINA, ON NATIONAL GUARD AND VETERANS' PROBLEMS,  
AT THE SOUTHERN GOVERNORS' CONFERENCE IN THE GROVE  
PARK INN, ASHEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA, OCTOBER 21, 1947.

NATIONAL GUARD

IMPORTANCE

The National Guard is as important to the defense  
of the United States as the Regular Army. During both World  
Wars, 98 per cent of our forces were citizen-soldiers; only  
2 per cent were professionals. During the recent war, the  
National Guard provided the Army of the United States with  
18 divisions, in addition to Field and Coast Artillery units  
and Corps and Army troops, altogether totalling 323,000 men.  
*when war began,*  
The Regular Army had only 9 divisions, totalling 257,095 men.  
All of the National Guard divisions made notable records in  
combat.

The National Guard is purposely scattered all over  
the 48 States. We have been told repeatedly by top military  
leaders that the first target in the next war will undoubtedly  
be the United States. Furthermore, the United States will be  
attacked at many points simultaneously. Troops spread all  
over America are necessary to meet this type of attack.

STATUS

As planned by the War Department, the new National  
Guard will ultimately total 622,500 officers and men. Cur-  
rently, it has <sup>only</sup> about 150,000. South Carolina's quota is  
more than three times what it was in 1941, and I presume all  
*states have had similar increases.*

*This is the original, used in delivering this statement.*  
*J. Strom Thurmond*  
*Governor*



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~~States have had increases.~~

GOALS

The new National Guard is now conducting a nationwide recruiting campaign with the hope of bringing its enrollment up to about 200,000 men by the middle of next month.

During the fiscal year 1948-49, the National Guard bureau plans to recognize 4,500 ground units and 355 air units. Its procurement goal for officers, warrant officers, and enlisted men during this period is 250,000 for ground troops and 21,000 for air units. Its program for the fiscal year 1949-50 is recognition of 5,000 ground units and 514 air units. The planned strength in fiscal year 1949-50 is 300,000 ground troops and 41,000 air troops. South Carolina has been assigned 4 air units and 112 ground units. We gladly accepted the increased allotment and have already activated all of our air units and 94 of <sup>the 112</sup> our ground units. This gives us one of the best records in the Nation.

The War Department plan calls for 25 National Guard Infantry Divisions and 2 Armored Divisions. The effective use of regimental combat teams during the war led the Army to set up 21 in the National Guard. The ground troops of the new National Guard will include 123 Anti-aircraft battalions, 20 tank battalions, 19 tank destroyer battalions,



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15 mechanized cavalry squadrons, and Field Artillery, Coast Artillery, Engineer, Medical, Ordnance, Signal, Quartermaster, and Chemical Warfare troops.

Whereas the prewar National Guard had a complete air complement of only 25 observation squadrons, in the new setup there will be 72 fighter squadrons and 12 light bombardment squadrons when organization is complete. Presently, the National Guard fighter squadrons are flying P-51's and P-47's but jet-propelled P-80's are scheduled for delivery beginning in 1948. In addition, the National Guard will have 12 light bombardment squadrons flying A-26's and will also include radar and communications networks of aircraft control and warning squadrons.

#### TRAINING

We are entering a new era of warfare and our troops must be prepared for it. This means that the National Guard is now more important than it has ever been. The new National Guard's training has actually begun. During the past summer approximately 60,000 men attended the regular encampments or schools. These were the first encampments to be held since 1940. As Governors of the States, we must make certain that our troops receive the best possible training and the best possible equipment. They must be trained up to the minute. We can no longer afford the time which we have been given by



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fortune in the past to bring National Guard troops to efficiency after they have already entered the Federal service.

#### EQUIPMENT

According to the Adjutant General of South Carolina, our troops are getting the very best equipment and arms. His information is that when new and better weapons are developed, the National Guard will also receive them. We have no complaint in South Carolina about the treatment accorded us by the War Department.

#### PROBLEMS

The type of war we will have to fight in the future raises new problems, and I shall refer to a few of them.

In South Carolina we now have 40 National Guard armories, many of them housing as many as 3 units. We need 36 more armories at the least, and as many as 60 more garages to house federal property. Considering the high cost of construction, it would not be feasible for South Carolina alone to build these installations. As the National Guard is a joint Federal-State organization, I think the armories should be paid for jointly. I think it is quite reasonable that the Federal government should pay half of their costs. At present, no federal funds are available for this construction. I think we should go on record as urging Congress to take immediate action to provide funds for the construction



of armories, garages, and gun parks.

In all probability, our intelligence agents will detect pretty well in advance any unfriendly moves directed toward us. I am sure that the Government of the United States, in such an event, will federalize the National Guard without delay. The National Guard may be compelled to stay under arms for long periods. The reemployment provisions guaranteed by the Selective Service Act have expired with that Act, and I think the States should give consideration to the drafting of State laws for reemployment based upon the National Selective Service Act provisions.

The mobilization of the National Guard and its probable employment outside of the United States brings to the front a problem which is more pressing than it has been before. This is the necessity for <sup>promptly</sup> organizing home guard forces for internal security. If there is no actual ground combat inside the United States during the next war, there certainly will be wide-spread air attacks and well-organized sabotage. I think it would be well for us to give consideration to <sup>a plan for expeditions</sup> organizing State Guards to take the place of the National Guard when it is mobilized. From all indications, we may well lose the next war unless we are absolutely prepared before it begins.



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Thus far, according to our experience in South Carolina, we have had no problem of recruitment. The Adjutant General informs me that we will make our quotas with ease. I am sure that a great many States are not as fortunate in this respect as South Carolina. I believe it would be a great thing if we unanimously went on record as *reaffirming* <sup>our</sup> ~~approval~~ <sup>of</sup> Universal Military Training. Universal Military Training would solve all problems of recruitment both in the regular military services and in the National Guard immediately. In addition, it would give us a far better type of soldier for our National Guard.

In the past, National Guard troops have not been as well trained as they should have been. This was to a large measure due to the fact that the officers had to spend a great deal of their time on administrative and recruiting work. Because of the Army's insistence on so much paper work, training became secondary. We must not allow this to happen again. It would be good for us to give some consideration to this problem. A possible solution might be for the States to hire civilian assistants to handle supply and paper work. On the other hand, it might be better to get the War Department to assign Regular Army enlisted men or officers to perform these functions. Again,



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we might be able to get some National Guard members to go on more or less full-time duty for this work.

The National Guard has already adopted the Regular Army physical and age-in-grade standards. As you all know, the time will come when efforts will be made to break these qualifications. We should throw all of our weight toward maintaining them. The National Guard has been called on to do just as much fighting as the Regular Army and I think its personnel should be equally fit. We saw how much dead-wood the Army had to clean out of National Guard divisions in 1940 and 1941 before they could be called ready for combat. Let's not allow this dead-wood to accumulate again.

Along this same line of thought, I believe that National Guard promotions above the rank of captain should no longer be made on the basis of seniority. I favor a selection system. It was clearly shown during the war that young men could handle positions of great responsibility. I see no reason why this same system could not be used in peacetime. Of course, it will hurt a great many feelings, but on the other hand, if we do not do it, hindsight may sometime show us that we toyed with the security of our nation. A merit system of promotion would put all officers on their toes. It would be good for the service. It would also be good for



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the United States.

I think too that we should approach the War Department on the possibility of sending more candidates for National Guard commissions through the Regular Army officer candidate schools. I do not think we should have an officer in the National Guard who could not pass this course.

#### VETERANS

One of the most outstanding problems concerned with the welfare of veterans is housing. We should devote our efforts to crystallizing public opinion to the end that sufficient housing be made available at reasonable prices to the veterans who have served our country so well.

Another phase of veterans' welfare deserves our immediate attention. We have in South Carolina 35,000 veterans of World War I and the previous wars. We have 174,000 veterans of World War II. The main veteran problem which we have in South Carolina is hospitalization. We have in Columbia only one Veterans Hospital which now has about 700 beds. A year ago this past February, the Veterans Administration decided to establish another hospital in Greenville of 300 beds. Actually nothing has been done towards construction of this hospital except the selection of the site. Two weeks ago the



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Veterans Administration got Greenville to spend \$29,000 to extend sewer lines to this site. It is now hoped that construction will get under way by next January. This is not a very good record. We need hospital facilities and we need them now. If this hospital were completely built today, it would be totally inadequate for our needs. Greenville County alone has 20,000 veterans. Anderson and Spartanburg Counties, which adjoin Greenville, have a total of 26,400 veterans. In addition to the general medical situation, we are badly in need of mental and tuberculosis facilities. In Augusta, Georgia, there is a 1,300 bed mental hospital for white veterans of South Carolina and Georgia. We must send our Negro mental and tuberculosis cases to Tuskegee, Alabama. Most of our white tuberculosis cases go to Oteen, North Carolina. This Oteen hospital serves Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, Alabama, and Georgia. Patients are admitted only if beds are available, and frequently beds are not available. The Veterans Hospital in Columbia has 90 beds set aside for tubercular patients.

The tubercular incidence among Negroes is very high, and 42.9 per cent of South Carolina's total population



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is colored. It has been our experience that Negroes do not want to go far from their homes. I think it would be well for this to be called to the attention of the Veterans Administration. I am sure that each of the Southern States could very easily use a Negro tuberculosis hospital. Along this same line, it is a fact that national Negro groups are putting pressure on the Veterans Administration to hospitalize white and Negro veterans together. It might be well for us Southern Governors to let the Veterans Administration realize that this is impractical in the South.

Because of lack of Federal facilities, we are forced to admit a sizeable number of South Carolina veterans as mental cases to our State Hospital for the insane. It is the business of the Federal government to provide adequate mental facilities for the veterans, and I think we should make strong recommendations to the Veterans Administration with regard to this problem. It is not fair to veterans to place them in State Hospitals. Because of overcrowded conditions, they cannot receive the treatment to which they are entitled by their service to their nation.